



October 2008

The Metro

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Hi Everyone

Can you believe we are almost at the end of September? Where has the year gone? As a club we still have a busy schedule ahead of us and we need to focus on making the events we have coming up a success for us all & our service projects.

At the time of writing this pre Spring Walk I am going to thank Sylvi for her efforts to organise this event for Unifem. I am sure a fun time was had by all attendees.

We have a trivia night coming up on October 22 which should be a lot of fun. The Beach House Restaurant will provide us with a casual & different environment and the fact we all get a meal is a bonus. I encourage you all to take a table of ten people - we need to sell 120 tickets to fill the venue. Please put some thought into some raffle & trivia winner prizes and also some fun things as little prizes to give out throughout the night.

The movie night *Australia* will be another opportunity for the club to finish off our fundraising year with a bang. We are busy thinking of some truly Australian snacks to offer, the party pie for example. We just need to make sure they are delivered nice and hot. If anyone has ideas on how to make this night a truly Aussie theme let us know.

At our October meeting we have Nicola Crawford from St Rita's College coming to speak to us about a mentoring program with the girls at the college. I am quite excited about the prospect of being involved with this program as it is a way for our club to contribute to the development of young women in a different way. I am sure with the diverse group of members that we have from varied professional backgrounds that we could have a lot to offer. There is also the opportunity for our club to let young women know more about Zonta and the wonderful things that we do. Who knows down the track we might be able to have our very own Z Club.

Board members for 2008/09

President Amena Reza	Vice President Jan Mohr	Treasurer Emma Turner	Corresponding Secretary Celeste Neander	Recording Secretary Sylvi Delaney
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Directors: Jill Gleeson, Suzanne Brooks

Committee Chairs:

<i>Status of Women & Service/UN</i>	Cath Cossar
<i>Organisation, Membership & Classification</i>	Jill Gleeson
<i>Public Relations & Communications</i>	Jan Mohr/Celeste Neander

District 22; Area 3; Club No. 1624 **DISTRICT GOVERNOR:** Vicki Varthas

Website: www.zontadistrict24.org

Club postal address: PO Box 15524, City East Qld 4002

PRESIDENT'S REPORT CON'T

There are also many opportunities for our members to get "hands on" coming up in the calendar. We have the Bag assembly for Bahloo afternoon at Rita's place on 11 October & the Breast Care Cushion sewing bee on the 19th October at Kate's. There are also the monthly visits to the Detention centre scheduled for the 20th September & 18th October. This is a great opportunity for us to get together and get to know one another better whilst getting on with the job! Please get involved if you can.

As the year comes to a close we need to put our minds to 2009, where are we at with our current service projects, is there any other projects we would like to consider supporting, are our members enjoying their Zonta experience and what they can contribute, how can we continue to grow our membership and what lies ahead in terms of exciting new fundraising ideas. I encourage you all to put down your thoughts so next year's planning meeting brings out some productive & new strategies for our club.

Jan & I recently attended the Club Officer's workshop & training day. We got to meet our new Area 3 Director Janet Burrage who we will hopefully have along to a club meeting in the near future. We shared ideas with other club members and certainly picked up some tips on our responsibilities as officeholders. I believe as a club we need to raise our profile about what we are doing as many of our fellow Zontians were surprised to hear about the depth of club's service projects and the extent of our fundraising.

And finally a big congratulations to Emma and her husband on the arrival of their baby girl. What a blessing for them and also for our club to have another junior in our ranks.

Your President
Amena

Zonta BMBC Dates to remember

- **Sunday 28 September** - Spring Walk on at Orleigh Park
- **Wednesday 1 October** – Monthly breakfast meeting
- **Saturday October 11** – Working Bee for Bahloo bags
- **Sunday October 19** – Breast Care Cushion Sewing Bee
- **Wednesday 22 October** - Trivia Night at Beachhouse Restaurant, Chermside
- **Wednesday 5 November** – Monthly breakfast meeting
- **4 and 6 November** - Suzanne's perfumery evenings at Libertine Parfumerie
- **Tuesday 2 December** - Screening of "Australia" at Dendy, Portside
- **Wednesday 3 December**- Christmas Breakfast meeting
- **Thursday 30 April 2009** – 39 Steps at Twelfth Night Theatre



Sylvi and husband Bill took part in the 10km Bridge to Brisbane fun run this year. It truly was a memorable (but once in a lifetime) experience. Starting with the 4am wake-up to catch the bus to the Bridge, waiting until 6:48am for our turn to start (we were “yellow joggers” – the slowest possible pace of joggers), coming upon blood streaked or delirious casualties along the way, getting to the 5km mark and thinking it might be time to walk, then suddenly it was 8km, then 9, then the smell of the cow poo from last month’s Ekka, then crossing the finish line and feeling extremely proud and definitely wanting breakfast. “Yellow Joggers” had 85 mins to complete - Bill did 66 mins, Sylvi 72.

What’s in the SUGGESTION BOX? Ever been running late for our breakfast meeting and the lift just won’t come fast enough?! This prompted one Zontian to suggest everyone could send the elevator back to ground when you arrive for breakfast and visa versa when leaving to help minimize delays.

139 Club – anyone with second hand towels, new rubber thongs and miniature shampoos etc (the kind obtained from hotel stays) please bring along to the Breakfast Meetings as Suzanne and Jean often visit and can drop off to the 139 Club (a drop in centre for the homeless on Brunswick Street).

Organisation, Membership & Classification Committee Report

The major activity currently the focus of OM&C committee members is the Information Evening for new / prospective members planned for Thursday, 23 October, at Amena's office in Ann Street. The campaign to recruit new members through nominations by current members has resulted in eight invitees for the Information Evening. There is still time so if you wish to forward names and postal addresses or email addresses to Jill Gleeson (jilleg3@bigpond.com.au) an invitation will be sent out.

The committee decided to change somewhat the traditional format of the Information Evening as a trial for the next one. Members felt that we should be showcasing (with the use of photographs) and "telling the story" more with anecdotes from committee members about the kinds of hands –on activities we are involved in. However the evening's program will continue to be structured and include details of important international projects and the need for member commitment and the expectation that "service" by members is part of Zonta's ethos.

Hopefully we'll have a good roll-up and fresh enthusiasm!

Jill Gleeson

Public Relations & Communications Committee Report

Following removal of fundraising as a direct responsibility of this committee, the key areas of focus have now been agreed as follows:

- Re-launch of the club newsletter – Kate Farrell is our new newsletter editor and the aim is to produce the newsletter on a monthly basis and have this emailed to members on the Monday prior to each club meeting. We trust that you enjoyed the September and this edition and encourage you to submit articles for inclusion in future editions. The deadline is the Friday prior to the club meeting.
- Maintenance and update of the club website.
- Development of a brief standard information pack for guest speakers and other relationships. By the end of this calendar year, we are hoping to have a summary pack (electronic form) that overviews Zonta and our Club. This will provide a useful background briefing for our guest speakers and potential service project partners etc.

- Establishment of a contacts database – Susan Taylor has volunteered to investigate how this can be done most efficiently. This has a few purposes – to capture internal contacts e.g. other Zonta clubs and key district and area people for the dissemination of information and as well as “friends of Zonta”, ie those who may be past members or established supporters of our fundraisers. With a database of email addresses, we can quickly and efficiently send invitations to our fundraising functions which will help us to more easily reach a large group of potential supporters for our fundraisers.

- Photo library – Celeste has volunteered to commence assembling a photographic history of our club’s activities. We would like to have this project well advanced for our 10th anniversary celebrations in July of 2009.

- Zonta International website - all members to be encouraged to register on ZI website as a source of accessing current information as well as a means of correcting and/or changing contact details

We look forward to bringing you updates on our progress towards achievement of these goals throughout the year and trust that we will have the cooperation of all club members as we look to improve communication, both internal and external, for the benefit of all.

Kind regards

Jan & Celeste

Our Club's 10th Anniversary in 2009 - photos required

Our club's 10th anniversary will be celebrated in 2009 and planning is now under way for a fabulous function. At this stage, we are looking to arrange a pictorial display of the history of the club for viewing at our anniversary celebration. If anyone has any photographs of club members and/or service projects and activities that they have taken over the years, could they please make them available to Celeste as soon as possible? For digital copies, please send to Celeste via email at cneander@westpac.com.au. Original copies (where non-digital) will be promptly handed back to you for your records. Thanking you in anticipation of your cooperation.

THE PIXIE GOES TO INDIA – PART 1 by Rita Logan

I now know the best way to get proficient at cornering and slow riding ... forget doing the riding course at Mt Cotton - go riding in India!! However, be aware that you will also pick up habits that could cause serious road-rage problems for you in Australia, should you be foolish enough to try them at home.

To call riding Indian roads “challenging” is putting it mildly! Part 2 will describe each of the riding days on my Ferris Wheels Himalayan Adventure, but to give you a general picture, the key descriptor for riding in India is CHAOS .. organised chaos, but chaos nevertheless. Somehow it all works – in India, everyone owns every part of the road! There is no real concept of “this is my lane going in this direction, and that is your lane going in the opposite direction” - essentially, I can go anywhere I want, so long as I blow my horn loud enough and long enough to let you know that I want to get past you, or want what (in Australia) you might consider to be “your” part of the road. It does make for some interesting times – imagine coming around a blind right-hand corner down a steep climb to find two Tata trucks taking up the whole of the road, and obviously expecting that you will move off the road (over that cliff, possibly?) to enable them to continue side-by-side on their lumbering way. Believe me, it happens, and get out their way you do! Lane markings and instructions on road signs, assuming there are any, are simply a “recommendation” - to be considered, or not, depending on your mood at the time. 99% of the time the Tata truck drivers were extremely courteous – however, bus and car drivers in India are serious maniacs!! And most motorbike riders (and their several passengers) just want to pass you again and again, to get a really good look at those silly white creatures in their helmets, boots, jackets and draggin jeans in the searing heat.

To add to that general picture of the roads in India, let me tell you what you will find there, other than cars, buses, trucks, motorbikes, cycles and people everywhere ... you will also come across (in rough order of size) elephants, yaks, water buffaloes, camels, horses, cattle of all sizes and colours, donkeys, sheep, goats, monkeys, chickens, dogs and if you're lucky, like me, a litter of eight tiny puppies wandering the roads (or lying on them) – and the expectation is that you and everyone else will go to extraordinary lengths to avoid hitting any and all of these creatures of God, and allow them to go wherever they want.



My bike, broken down at the side of the road



Cold up there on the world's highest road

To round out that general picture, there are the various road surface conditions ... bitumen if you are lucky, potholes almost always, dirt roads such as you will find at home, mud baths, water features, dust bowls, rocks of all shapes and sizes on dirt roads such as you will never find at home, and always and ever in between all of these, the ubiquitous roadworks – all you can do is power on through it all.

And without a doubt, the best vehicle on which to “power on through” in India is the Royal Enfield Bullet! My Boulevard would have died of shock before the end of the second day's

riding! I would have to say that the Royal Enfield is not the most comfortable of rides – more padding on the seat would definitely have helped those of us with insufficient padding in the appropriate place – however, it has guts, power, great shock absorbers, quick reflexive responses if you can manage them, and is apparently pretty easy to fix at the side of the road when you have the right mechanics travelling with you as we were fortunate to have. I even learned to stand on the pegs for quite long stretches over very rough road to assist with the riding experience, something I would never attempt on the Boulevard. Getting used to the foot controls being on the wrong side, and upside-down in the case of the gears, was a big challenge on the first day, but became second nature in very short order ... thank God!!

OK, let's get off the roads and the riding, since Part 2 will be full of those, and let's tell you about the trip from the point of view of the rest of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Accommodation ranged from an en-suited tent at Sarchu high in the Himalayas, to the almost palatial Timber Trail Resort at Parwanoo on the way back to Delhi, and was always good. Beds were generally much firmer (ie hard) than one might find at home – but at least you didn't get smothered in a soft middle bit like you do in some hotels/motels here. On all but one occasion, I had a hot shower whenever I wanted it, so long as I didn't expect copious quantities of water to go with the heat ... unfortunately, the one day I had to endure a cold shower, I **really** needed a hot one, because I'd come off three times that day and my body was showing many signs of its age and the Indian experience. Enough to make this girl weep under her cold shower!

Those of you who believe me to be a very picky eater will be surprised to hear that I tried almost every available Indian food experience put in front of me – except dahl! Call me fussy, but I really cannot come at chick peas! Some things I really enjoyed, many I found a little bit hot for my tender mouth, while a few simply left me completely cold ... but I did try them!! You might also be surprised to learn that I've been eating almost exclusively vegetarian food for the past three weeks (I can hear the laughs from here). I loved the Indian bread that came with every lunch and dinner, but my teeth had a terrible time trying to chew the Indian toast that was part of every breakfast. However, I think the group were all of the same opinion by the end of the trip – we were well and truly over rice! If I don't see rice on my dinner plate again for the next year, I think I'll die a happy vegemite (my first night's dinner at home was bangers and mash, followed by bread and butter pudding, and I was in culinary heaven!). And I have to say that I was extremely fortunate to not need any of the bowel-calming or bowel-revving medication that I carried with me!



Happy girls at Khardung La



Lamayuru Temple and village before we went down there

Weatherwise, the trip was full of contrasts – extremely hot and humid in Delhi, Chandigarh and the lower-lying parts that we travelled through; very cold with sleet and snow over the various passes in the Himalayas; and in between very pleasant riding weather. We had only one day when it really rained heavily, coming into Mandi on the second day of riding, to arrive at our hotel completely drenched. Altitude was an issue as we got higher into the Himalayas and the air got thinner – I think most of us had at least a day or two taking altitude tablets. All in all, though, I think everyone had enough of the right riding gear and the riding conditions from a weather perspective were manageable.

India is an awesome visual experience. The landscape on our trip ranged from bright green flat areas, to tree-lined hills with rivers at the bottom, to moonscapes of various shades with no vegetation, no birds, very little wild-life (except what was on the roads, of course) and vast white-capped mountains both in the distance and up close, back to tree-lined hills and rivers, and finally back to bright green flat areas. All of the landscapes were huge and awe-inspiring. Many of the towns were built high into the side of hills, with the prime example being Shimla, the summer home of the ruling English class during their reign in India.

Along the way (except in Kashmir) were groups of women in fabulously coloured and textured selwars and saris ... at no time did I see two women in the same group (or even in the same district it seemed) dressed in the same colour or pattern – I reckon they all get on their mobiles (every one in India has at least one mobile) each morning to find out what colour outfit each is going to wear that day .. there's no other way there could be such a profusion of colour with absolutely no duplication! And then there were the large groups of school children, all decked out in their bright WHITE and coloured uniforms, all the girls with pigtails tied up with red ribbons. A kaleidoscope of colour in all the colours of the rainbow wherever we went.

Every town we went through was a cacophony of sounds, sights and smells, all assaulting the senses at the same time, and making the task of actually negotiating the traffic (both vehicular, human and animal) that much more of a challenge – the size and scale of everything in India is almost more than the senses can absorb, but wonderful all the same.



view from on the suspension bridge



the Camp at Sarchu dwarfed by the landscape

Despite some doubts along the way due to rumours of general strikes that meant no traffic allowed either in or out, we did make it into Muslim-dominated Kashmir Province and onto the Dal Lake in Srinagar and our beautiful house-boat accommodation. There was a huge military presence with soldiers with guns everywhere, and by thinking of them as toy guns, I was able to just go with the flow without thinking too much about safety concerns. We did generate an enormous amount of interest everywhere we went in Kashmir – large numbers of generally silent men gathered around us every time we stopped within the province, with virtually no women to be seen anywhere. It was a bit spooky at times. There were absolutely no tourists in Kashmir – it is one of the top “don't go” recommendations of the Australian Government apparently – and that meant that we were the sole focus of the touts and traders on the Dal Lake whenever we moved off the houseboat (and even when we didn't) which was an interesting and sometimes fun experience. Eventually I learned to bargain items down, or just say NO!

The only time I was a bit worried about safety was actually in Delhi where five bomb blasts occurred half an hour after we arrived at our hotel at the end of the trip. Lots of the group had phone calls, texts or e-mails from family and friends concerned about them, but apparently none of the several people in my house nor any of my mates at home saw it on the news or made the connection between bombs in Delhi and me being there, 'cos no-one contacted me.

The group that I travelled with was made up of amazing people (all Australians except for two lovely Irish men), as are almost all motor bike groups that I have had the pleasure of meeting and travelling with! We were not without our accidents – unfortunately one major one which involved one of our mechanics and ended up with him in hospital with multiple broken bones!

Between us, one of the other women and I accounted for most (but by no means all) of the other incidents of parting company from the bike – about 12 between us, and I reckon she had more than me (but who's counting)!! Basically I suffered the same injury as the North Queensland trip on the second day of riding which took about a week to heal. I had about two days of riding with a well body, and then managed to have another fall on the left side that is still causing me some problems, but which I managed to overcome with vast quantities of drugs while in India. Thankfully, no broken bones!

I have two tips for you if you want to do the Ferris Wheels Himalayan Adventure trip. The first of these is that if you are a female rider, don't go on your own. This is a very hard and challenging riding experience, the likes of which you will **not** have experienced at home. There were six girls (four riders and two pillioners) aside from Denise Ferris on the trip, and all had either their partner or friends with them. In fact, everyone on the trip was with a partner or friends except one male and me, which I was told was very unusual (generally about half the group know no-one else at the start of the trip). I did have a male friend who was going on the trip, but he broken his leg in a bike accident the day I left for three days in Singapore on the way, so he didn't make it to India (since it was his second attempt, I think he should just give up the idea altogether now). While I often ride alone in Australia and thoroughly enjoy it, when I ride in a group I am always with friends, and riding in a group without friends I found to be a very solitary and emotionally-draining experience, particularly in the first three or four days before I got to know others in the group.



the top of Zoji La



on top of Taglang La

My second tip is to definitely have some serious dirt-bike riding experience before you go – preferably in all weather conditions and on all possible road surfaces. I've been on a few non-bitumen roads in Queensland, but nothing that could have prepared me for the experience of Indian roads, particularly in the Himalayas. I think that those within the group who had off-road experience were far better prepared for the conditions than those of us without that background or experience.

In terms of picking an overseas bike experience for my first one, I think I picked the hardest one that there is out there, and that any future overseas riding experience will be a piece of cake after India. I'm immensely proud of myself for hanging in there and finishing it – there were times along the way when I doubted whether I could keep going, and no doubt times when other people doubted that I would hang in there as well – but the sense of achievement when we got to our hotel in Delhi was amazing – I'm sure that the photos will capture the euphoria that we all felt at the end.

As a 55th birthday present to myself, I certainly picked an exacting one – how the hell am I going to top that for my 60th birthday!!

The Pixie aka Rita



Congratulations.....

To Emma and her husband, Alam, on the safe arrival of Hannah Louise on Sunday 21 September 2008 at 10.52am, weighing 7lb 4oz. Well done, Emma! A future Zontian in the making?

